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RECORD OF CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT K. BROWN

July 17, 1968

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Captain Brown knew of me through Herb Rau of the Miami Herald.

Brown has been inthe process of assembling material (primarily in South Miami) for an anti-CIA book. "We need a CIA but we should not have to put up with their incompetency".

Brown is 30-40 years old and has a permanent home in Boulder, Colorado. He was in the Army (Special Service and Intelligence) until approximately 1958. He has been in the Reserves since then, with periods of recall.

He has been involved with the Cubans since 1958. He went to Cuba for two weeks in 1958, for several months in the winter and spring of 1959 and during March and April of 1960. In an aside, he said that he wished he had never become involved with Cuba because it has caused him much grief, time and money.

Brown was employed by LIFE Magazine during the summer of 1967 to work on a story on the Kennedy Assassination/Garrison case. He worked with Dick Billings and Mike Accoca. They spent a great deal of money but he does not believe that anything has been published as a result.

During the years 1960-1963, he spent much time in and around Miami, involved with the "Cuban Venture". He knows most of the "Soldiers of Fortune" quite well and much of the rest of this memo deals with them and their activities.

Generally speaking, Brown felt that the soldiers of fortune should be properly called the "Soldiers of Misfortune". They were always broke and in trouble and few of them got much out of their labors. Many of their exploits were fictional.

Turning to the various characters of interest, Brown first mentioned Loran Hall, whom he described as a psychological liar. Brown first met Hall in 1959 in Havana. At that time, Hall was operating with a Nicaraguan group, training on some property owned by Cienfuegos. Hall apparently had a falling out with the Nicaraguans and as a result was thrown in jail. Eventually, Hall was released and returned to the U. S.

Brown ran into Hall again in 1963 on the West Coast where Hall was operating with the Birchers. Steve Wilson and Gerry Patrick were also in the group. Hall was giving the Birchers all kinds of bull on what he planned to do about Fidel.

Brown next discussed Lawrence Howard. He does not have too high a regard but said that his credibility was better than Hall's. Brown said that Howard had run a training

camp for Mas Ferrer in 1963. This camp had been previously closed in December of 1962 and reopened in the spring of 1963; Howard ran it until it was similarly closed down in September of 1963.

Brown described William Seymour as a nice guy who is now very 'gun shy'. He is not willing to talk about much of anything. Brown located him in 1967 through his sister, Mrs. E. A. Carey, 5234 East 1st Street, Tucson, Arizona.

There is some confusion in Brown's mind as to the relationship between Hall, Howard, Seymour, Castro Alba, and Mrs. Odio. According to Howard, he was never in Dallas at the same time as Seymour. He disclaims knowledge of many of Hall's activities in Dallas, saying that he just tagged along. If what Howard says is true, Hall, Howard and Castro Alba arrived in Dallas in approximately September 28th and left there for Miami on October 3 or 4. [It is possible that Hall, Seymour and Castro Alba returned to Dallas after being in Miami].

The next person discussed at length by Brown was Dennis Harber, generally known as the "professor" as he had taught languages in several school systems including New York City. Brown met Harber first in 1962. Harber appeared to have an individual source of income as he rarely worked. He had been

in Columbia in the 1950's, connected with Rojas. Brown described him as an alcoholic, homosexual, Catholic and Falangist. He was homosexual primarily when drunk, a close friend of Ed Collins and completely unscrupulous.

In 1963, Harber had a scheme to blow up in Havana Harbor a Yugoslavian ship which plied between Mexico and Cuba carrying phosphates. Harber went to Mexico to see about putting an explosive device aboard the Yugoslavian ship which could be exploded by radio. However, Harber wound up in a Mexican jail, 'accused of assassination'. [QUERY]

Brown interviewed Harber in Omaha in June of 1967. He appeared to be frightened to death about something and Brown attempted to exploit this fear. The only thing he would say was that "a man by the name of Johnny Abbes had come to Miami". Abbes was one of Trajillo's killers, but was recently killed by Duvalier's man.

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Brown next talked about Ed Collins, one of Harber's friends and room-mates. Callins was mixed up with the Canadian mafia. In connection with the mafia, Collins is supposed to have contacted a man whose first name is 'Gil'. Collins was also involved with an unknown Miami judge (he was picked up by the police one night in a car belonging to the judge's wife). On occasions, Collins had

large sums of money and big bills but was generally broke. Collins also had a good friend who was a pilot but Brown does not know his name. Gene Bradley, a friend of Collins, told Brown that Lee Harvey Oswald had breakfast with Collins at the boarding house in Miami at which all the soldiers of misfortune stayed. Brown says he does not believe Bradley on this point.

Dick Billings of LIFE believes that Collins was in Dallas on or about November 17th. As he recalls, there is a letter from Collings which would place him in Dallas at this time. With respect to this incident, Brown suggests that we might want to talk to one Bobby Willis. Said Collins drowned off Miami in a fishing incident. He was a superb swimmer and some question has been raised about this death. However, Brown has heard that Collins and his companions had been drinking heavily on this occasion.

As to Gerry Patrick, Brown rates his credibility as "very poor".

As to Jim Lewis, his credibility is "good".

Brown knew Frank Fiorini and said he believes he was bag man for the mafia.

Brown knew "Little Joe" Garman quite well. He is the son of a judge in Bowling Breen, Kentucky. He was a wild kid who was involved in booze, girls and gambling and is capable of violence. He is an extreme right winger. Brown

believes he will go back to Kentucky soon and become a gentleman farmer.

When I asked Brown about Justin "Steve" Wilson, he said he is still in Miami but has been out of all Cuban action for the last two years since he became married. Brown said Wilson's credibility is good and will probably answer any questions.

As to Youngblood, he said he has become the partner of Robin Morris's brother in Arkansas. Robin Morris was in the 'Green Berets' and there is a biography of Youngblood.

As to Ralph Schlafter, Brown said that he was generally on the periphery of action in Miami. [I believe he is currently under indictment with Mas Ferrer].

Brown mentioned John Martino who said that Lee Harvey Oswald had been in Miami; refer to Jerry Buchanan who claims to have had a fight with Oswald in Miami.

When asked about Kiki Ferrer, he said that he had died of a heart attack in late 1966. So far as he knew, no foul play involved.

When asked the present whereabouts of LaBorde, he said he was presently in Miami working on the boat TEJANA III. This boat is owned by Fernandez Casa. It is used for gun

running and the expenses are paid by the CIA. Brown said that LaBorde's credibility is bad.

Speaking of gun runners, Brown mentioned Del Myers of Tucson, a real right winger and an organizer of American Veterans Against Communism. The interesting thing to note is that this organization totally disappeared after Nov. 22, 1963. Brown has interviewed Myers but learned absolutely nothing.

Brown knows and has interviewed Lester Logue. Logue was one of ten people who threw a party for General Walker when he returned to Dallas. Logue claims that he never saw or heard from Hall after the abortive raid in the fall of 1963; Brown believes that this is untrue. Logue xxx sent money to Hall, who returned to the West by air.

Brown had considerable information on Richard Lauchli, the gun runner. He said that Lauchli was a superb machinist. He took a load of arms to Miami through Mississippi during the crisis there. Gerry Patrick and Steve Wilson became his agents in Miami for selling the arms. Collins may also have been involved in this. Lauchli was involved in a right wint training camp north of New Orleans in 1961 (?). This was a camp on the property of McLeney that was busted up by the FBI.

Brown also knew of a gun runner by the last name of Marino. He described him as a Cuban involved in the sale of arms in the Miami Area. In 1963, Gerry Patrick tried to hijack a cache of weapons from Marino. He went to what he thought was Marino's house and loaded up the guns. In fact, the cache belonged to Cisneros, a person allied with Patrick, Wilson, Hargraves and Davis. Cisneros was a right-hand man to Manolo Rey.

Brown knew Colonel Robert Castorr but would not talk about him. [QUERY].

Brown told an interesting story about the Kaplan Fund. A nephew of the founder of the fund, Joel Kaplan, is currently in a Mexico City jail. He had been in Mexico City working for the Kaplan Fund. A Puerto Rican named Vidal was killed and Joel Kaplan fled to Spain. He was picked up by Interpol and sent back to Mexico without formal extradition. When brought before a Mexican judge, he was turned loose. However, the police picked him up and put him back in jail. Joel's sister believes that Uncle Kaplan is trying to keep him in jail. Joel's mother went to Mexico City to help him and was beaten up. A Ramparts reporter received similar treatment. QUERY: What all this has to do with the JFK assassination.

As Brown is writing a book on CIA operations, he went into this subject at some length. In the Miami area, the CIA operated generally in two fairly specific manners.

They would take an existing bona fide organization such as Belcher Oil and use it as a cover for the CIA. A good example is the Rex incident. The Rex was technically owned by Belcher but was actually a CIA ship.

Secondly, the CIA would create a completely phony corporation. This corporation would normally have the telephone number and address of a local lawyer and nothing more. Ace Marine Survey of Miami is a good example. Incidentally, this corporation has three out of four directors in New Orleans.

During the years 1963-64, the CIA in Miami made much use of Manuel Artime, Manolo Rey and (FNU) Menoyo. These three men were paid to attempt to assassinate Fidel with CIA money.

In addition, the CIA sunk much money in training camps. One such was a camp in Nicarago run by Artime when he returned from prison in Cuba. Although his original funding was $1,500 per month, the CIA, according to Brown, spent 9 million dollars on this operation. When the operation was finally scrapped,

the boats, planes, ammunition, etc., were returned to Miami where they were sold for the benefits of the Cuban leaders. Brown feels there has been a great deal of corruption in the handling of CIA money and this is a good example.

The CIA leaders in Miami were as follows: Richard S. Kaynor, John Chandler, Gordon Campbell, Harvey Williams, George Woodson and Roy Hendrickson. Two of the principal fronts they used were Zenith Technical Enterprises and The Melmar Corporation. These operated out of the south campus of the Miami University, a former Naval Air Station. The installation has barb-wire fences, barricades, etc., and is strictly CIA. On this subject, see the book "The Invisible Government".

Brown referred to a current Cuban organization called "Cuban Power". It not only has blown up ships and consulates, it is responsible for the bombing of the Russian Embassy in Washington. The FBI knows of its members and activities but has never gotten enough evidence to prosecute.

Brown suggested that I read the following two items:

(1) An article by Andrew St. George, a Hungarian, in Parade Magazine of April 12, 1964, with respect to assassination attempts against Fidel, and,

(2) An article in the States Item by Bill Stuckey on CIA training grounds in and around New Orleans.

Brown is on his way to Vietnam but is still interested in having his book on the CIA published. A lawyer friend of his is attempting to peddle it. Any information with regard to this matter should be given to his Boulder office: Panther Publications, Box 361, Boulder, Colorado.

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